

UPSTAIRS BULLETIN

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

IN MEMORIAM

From the Bulletin of April 30, 1981

"Wherever we are, it is but a stage on the way to somewhere else, and whatever we do, however we do it, it is only a preparation to do something else that shall be different."

--Robert Louis Stevenson

And From July 1, 1981

"Self ego is that which sustains most of us -- the childish desire to believe. We, gifted by God with voice to please, are creatures set apart from mere mortal men, yet doubt constantly assails us. Are we as good as we think? Do we have a right to the adoration cast upon us? And, most important, when our voices fade and we are old, will we be forgotten?"

-- Giovanni Martinelli

NOT LIKELY!

As shown here in comments from book and bulletins.

"Memories are the only things we really own, unconditionally. We can be stripped of every earthly possession, but an intrinsic part of every human being is his store of memories. And to the stores of hundreds of dancers, thousands of dance fans, Bentley Stone and Walter Camryn have contributed notably. As the last Stone-Camryn show goes on, and, in the school, the last course is conducted, memories trip over one another in profusion. One remembers Bentley, classically perfect, demonstrating enchainements in class. And one recalls how Walter assumed a dozen different national styles in character class, always coming back to that strong, typical American gait. Going way back, I remember Bentley dancing with Bernice Holmes in the Auditorium, briefly converted to the Cascades night club, or with Ruth Pryor in Novikoff's opera ballets. And again with Ruth Page in the hilariously funny "Zephyr and

Flora" and the lyrically romantic "Liebestod." One retains images of Walter stepping blithely in his "Spring", and "Dapper Dan" or mock serious in "Casey at the Bat." I remember Stone's chic "Mercure" with Bettina Rosay, and "Les Enfants Perdus" and the bittersweet "L'Inconnue" with Ruth Ann Koesun and John Kriza. Hundreds of us remember Walter's "Dr. Eli Duffy's Snakeroot" with a succession of roustabouts -- Billy Reilly, Patrick Heim, Patrick Cummings, Dean Badolato. One could go on and on as images keep crowding. Bentley, Walter -- Thanks for the memories."

--Ann Barzel

"On July 31 at the end of its 40th consecutive summer course the Stone-Camryn School of Ballet will close, which just goes to show that nothing in this world is permanent. Bentley Stone and Walter Camryn have been a major part of the dance scene for years. They were dancers with the Chicago Civic Opera when such things were done in style. They kept right on dancing as well as teaching -- Bentley Stone was Ruth Page's partner for years. They are closing now because of the high cost of everything, and the difficulty of finding suitable replacements.

"Old hands on the scene, they are not hopeful about the future of resident ballet. They mention something I had not known. When the Chicago Civic Opera collapsed in the depression, its ballet master, Laurent Novikoff, had an offer for a coast-to-coast tour of the opera ballet. He had full repertory rehearsed and costumed, with guests from numerous international troupes. But he could get no financial support for the tour. Novikoff, if you are too young to remember, was once Pavlova's partner.

"Are Stone and Camryn taking their last bow? Of course not. They say "We might be teaching on a smaller scale in other schools (if asked)." The line forms at the left."

--Claudia Cassidy

"They both are dedicated men who have instilled many fine qualities in their students, including self-discipline with determination to accomplish the best one possibly can. Undoubtedly everyone was somehow benefited who studied there any length of time. And, so I send them my warm greetings."

--Karen Krych Casper

"All the best to Bentley Stone and Walter Camryn in appreciation of their great contribution to Dance and Dancers these many years. Their teaching, coaching and concern for so many wonderful dancers and choreographers. American Ballet Theatre is especially grateful for our beloved John Kriza and for Ruth Ann Koesun and so many talented and loyal Chicagoans who have been and are the greatest joy to us.

"Our cheers and deepest thanks."

--Lucia Chase

"Happiness to you both. Best ever." (London, Feb. 23, 1981)

--Anton Dolin

"So my dear both of you, enjoy your well earned rest. I shall always remember my very happy visits with you, your marvelous work and above all your friendship. Without that my visits would have been only another lesson to give -- instead an inspiration and wonderful experience!" (London '81)

--Joan Lawson

"It must be a source of tremendous satisfaction to you both to know that, in doing what you have loved for your lifetime, you have made such an incredible impact on the lives of so many people. As if this weren't enough, to be so universally appreciated, must be truly wonderful.

"Please know that both Dolores and I truly admire and love you and are eternally grateful for your interest and friendship."

--Larry Long

"Farewell to "The Boys" as we lovingly spoke of them in their early days in the World of Dance in Chicago.

"They were a breed of teacher of which we have so few today -- taking raw material and by dint of love and hard work over the years creating the dancers of which they were justly proud.

"Their contribution to Dance in Chicago was inestimable and they have left a legacy to point the way for the new, young generation to follow."

--Edna McRae

"Regret that I cannot be present at your "Farewell-Performance-Tribute" but please know that I am with you in thought and spirit -- as is your inspiration with me. Thank you always. Love, (Hamburg, March 1981)

-- John Neumeier

"I think of them primarily as dancers. Bentley and I first danced together in 1932 and we continued to do so for twenty-seven years. It was a fine association. They were so vital and dynamic, it is hard to imagine life without them."

--Ruth Page

"Bentley Stone and Walter Camryn have made an impressive contribution to dance in America, through the artistry and accomplishments of their pupils."

--Jerome Robbins

"This is to thank you for all you have done for Chicago -- for me, and for the American dance scene generally.

"Memory is such a great thing, not only can events reoccur but also feelings and atmospheres. And all this happening I think back over the time I have known you and the different moments when our paths have crossed."

--Sybil Shearer

"Dear Walter and Bentley, I want to thank the two of you, always, for having given me the gift of dance in its totality. Only upon leaving did I realize how rare is the teacher who cares enough and has the patience for both the infinite detail and grander inspiration that makes up the technique called Dance. To be blessed with not just one, but two such teachers during my crucial development has greatly contributed to the path that I have chosen to follow as an artist. I feel sad for the future generations of students who will not have the opportunity to be nurtured by the richness of your knowledge and care."

--Naomi Sorkin

Stone-Camryn at The Newberry Library

In honor of Bentley Stone and Walter Camryn, on June 25, 1984 John Neumeier, Director of the Hamburg Ballet and former Stone-Camryn student, generously donated his time and his talent to inaugurate the annual Stone-Camryn Memorial Dance Event at the Library with "An Evening with John Neumeier." Following a successful engagement at Ravinia with his company, John Neumeier spoke to an enthusiastic audience of over two hundred and thirty former Stone-Camryn students, contemporary local dancers, and dance enthusiasts. Though he prefers to refer to himself as a dancer and choreographer and not as a speaker, his verbal talents were certainly apparent that evening to an audience that included Ann Barzel, Andre Delfau, Madelene Hargadon, Orrin Kayan, Ruth Ann Koesun, Larry and Dolores Long, Edna McRae, Ruth Page, Sheila Reilly, Loretta Rozak, Kirstein Simone, Mark Turbyfill, and Father John Walsh. A small exhibit of materials on John Neumeier, Walter Camryn, and Bentley Stone from the Stone-Camryn Papers was featured.

The evening began with Victor Weber, Director of Development for The Newberry Library, introducing Joan Stone, who with Betsy Ross Davis was one of the organizer's of the evening's event. She, in turn, introduced her former dancing partner, John Neumeier. A highlight of the evening was the presentation by Lora Aborn to John Neumeier of her orchestration of "In My Landscape", a piece conceived and choreographed by Walter Camryn in which John Neumeier performed in 1961. After the program, the audience mingled for wine and conversation in the newly remodeled Hermon Dunlap Smith Exhibit Gallery. "An Evening with John Neumeier" was a great success and an auspicious kick-off for the annual Stone-Camryn Memorial Dance Event.

The Newberry Library is the repository for the Stone-Camryn Papers due to the interest in the Midwest Dance Collection expressed by both Walter Camryn and Bentley Stone during the last years of their lives. In 1982 Walter Camryn arranged with Diana Haskell, Curator of Modern Manuscripts at the Library, to have some of his printed and manuscript materials transferred to the Library. Bentley Stone, shortly thereafter, also donated some of his printed materials. After his death, Walter Camryn's trust agreement decreed that all of his journals and scrapbooks were to go to The Newberry Library (with the provision that they not be displayed to the public until five years after his death). The balance of his papers was given to Edward Cameron, who, in turn, gave them, as well as his share of Bentley Stone's papers and papers relating to the Stone-Camryn School, to the Library. Sheila Groth gave her share of the School's papers to the Library, and the Library purchased the remaining portion of the papers of Bentley Stone and the Stone-Camryn School.

Many individuals (too numerous to list individually) have contributed a single printed item or a few manuscript items to add to the Stone-Camryn Papers. Among the larger gifts are the forty-three photographs of the Stone-Camryn School that were exhibited at

Chicago's Daley Center in 1981, donated to the Library by Maria Finitzo. Gerre Berrington has given ten Idento Dance series records featuring Walter Camryn and Bentley Stone. Through many generous benefactors, the Library now has a complete run of the Upstairs Bulletin.

Anyone possessing interesting photographs, correspondence, programs, posters, or other archival materials from either Walter Camryn or Bentley Stone which they feel would make an important addition to the collection is encouraged to contact Carolyn A. Sheehy, Administator of the Midwest Dance Collection, The Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, IL 60610. (Telephone: [312] 943-9090, ext. 312.) Since it will take a great deal of time to catalog these papers, if you are not yet ready to part with an item, you might consider sending the Library a copy of it. Also, if anyone has a copy of Idento Dance series records ID #18 or ID #2, the Library would be interested in obtaining a copy.

Carolyn A. Sheehy

069-11-11

THE STONE-CAMRYN MEMORIAL FUND

In the Spring of 1983, friends and past students of the late Mssrs. Stone and Camryn established a Stone-Camryn Memorial Fund at the Newberry Library to commemorate and further the work of these two Chicago dance masters, including expediting the organization and description of the Stone-Camryn Papers, an important part of The Newberry Library's Midwest Dance Collection. In June 1984 the first Stone-Camryn Memorial Dance Program--one of a series we expect to provide based on a bequest from Mr. Camryn--was held at the Library. John Neumeier, Director of the Hamburg Ballet, spoke about his career and his relationship to Mssrs. Stone and Camryn as a student.

If you would like to contribute to the Stone-Camryn Memorial Fund, please fill out the form below and return it in the enclosed envelope. Checks should be made payable to the Newberry Library.

I enclose \$_____ to support the Stone-Camryn Memorial Fund.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Past and current dance activity: _____

Student of Stone-Camryn? _____ When: _____

A Memorial Service

in honour of

Walter Camryn

and

Bentley Stone

Monday, the twenty-sixth of March

five o'clock

The Cathedral of St. James

Wabash Avenue at Huron Street

Chicago

CHICAGO WAS ONCE
AMERICA'S BALLET CAPITAL

by — Jack Anderson

With the recent death of Bentley Stone at the age of 75, Chicago has lost a respected dancer, teacher and choreographer. As a student in Chicago in the 50's, I saw Mr. Stone in works by himself and other choreographers. It was late in his dancing career, yet I found him an expressive stage presence. However, it is not sentiment alone that makes me now declare him to be a product of a golden age of Chicago ballet.

... "It can be seriously argued that from World War I to just before the start of World War II Chicago was America's ballet capital. New York may have fostered modern dance, but Chicago supported ballet.

... "In 1941, Mr. Stone and Walter Camryn opened a school. Mr. Camryn had been managing a flower shop in Boise when, in 1927, he decided that what he wanted to do most in the world was to study ballet. So off to Chicago he went. He was 24 - an unheard-of age to begin dance training. Yet he received a scholarship to Bolm's school, performed with the Chicago Opera and the Page-Stone Ballet and choreographed many successful works. I remember his witty Americana sketches with particular pleasure. When he and Mr. Stone retired in 1981, the Stone-Camryn School had achieved an international reputation."

(from The New York Times, Sunday, April 1, 1984)

BENTLEY STONE, 75
RAN BALLET SCHOOL
IN CHICAGO

Memorial Services were pending for Bentley Stone, 75, a leading classical dancer of the 1930's and a partner in the former Stone-Camryn Ballet School in Chicago, which produced dancers for many of the nation's leading ballet companies.

Mr. Stone, who was hailed in 1937 by American Dancer magazine as "one of the finest premiers of dance in the country", died Friday in Northwestern Memorial Hospital after suffering several strokes.

Nicole Finitzo, a Stone-Camryn student, called Mr. Stone "a unique, irreplaceable person."

Pat Downey, another former student, said, "He was a brilliant teacher. Like all good teachers he taught not only the subject but the taste, the movement and the placement of dance."

Mr. Stone founded the school in 1940 with Walter Camryn, then a soloist with the Chicago opera ballet. They closed the school in 1981 because their health was failing.

More than 20 of Stone's students, including Scott Schlexer, have joined the American Ballet Theatre. Schlexer is now performing with the company in the Auditorium Theatre.

Other Stone-Camryn graduates include John Neumeier, director of the Hamburg Ballet; Peggy Lyman of the Martha Graham Company; and Lauren Rouse of the Joffrey Ballet.

"I know of no other school that has a better record with its students", said Joan Ehemann Stone, a former student and American Ballet Theatre dancer.

Mr. Stone began his career in 1930 as principal dancer for the Chicago Civic Opera Ballet Company. In 1933, Mr. Stone and dancer Ruth Page formed the Stone-Page Ballet Company, forerunner of the Ruth Page International Ballet.

They created several original ballets, the best-known of which, "Frankie and Johnny", was revived in 1981 in London's Covent Garden. Stone also choreographed "L'Inconnue" for the American Ballet Theatre in 1965.

Mr. Stone's career was interrupted in 1942, when he was drafted into the Army. After his discharge, he resumed teaching at Stone-Camryn.

(Chicago Tribune, Sunday - February 12, 1984)

BALLET MASTER CAMRYN, 80, DIES

Walter Camryn, 80, noted Chicago ballet dancer and teacher, died Wednesday in Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Mr. Camryn, of the Near North Side, was a pioneer in the use of American themes in classical dance. He began as a soloist with the Chicago City Opera ballet troupe, danced at the Century of Progress World's Fair here in 1933-34 and the Page-Stone Ballet Theater in the federal WPA's theater project.

With the late Bentley Stone, Mr. Camryn ran the Stone-Camryn School of Dance for more than 50 years until it was disbanded in 1982, but Mr. Camryn continued teaching until last summer. At least 19 of the school's students went on to perform with the American Ballet Theater, a record unrivaled by other U.S. ballet schools.

An early devotee of Americana, Mr. Camryn choreographed "That Daring Young Man", "The Shooting of Dan McGrew", "Dr. Eli Duffy's Snake-root" and more. He developed his own system of teaching "character" dance, a folk-rooted style of classical dance that until recently had been neglected elsewhere in this country.

Mr. Camryn also taught dance and directed for many years the city-sponsored Chicago Children's Civic Theater.

Memorial services will be held at 5:00 p.m., March 26th in St. James Episcopal Cathedral, Wabash and Huron. Private burial will be in Helena, Montana.

(Chicago Sun Times, Friday March 2, 1984)

IN APPRECIATION

To Bentley Stone and Walter Camryn for dedication to their Art and the great gifts they have brought to dance. They have educated not only bodies to move but minds to think and to develop values, tastes and a standard of perfection. A most special talent has been to encourage the pursuit of excellence in all things.

-- A friend

WALTER CAMRYN, CO-FOUNDER OF DANCE SCHOOL

A memorial service for Walter Camryn, 80, renowned Chicago dance teacher, will be held at 5:00 p.m. March 26 in St. James Episcopal Cathedral, Wabash Avenue and Huron Street.

Mr. Camryn, a resident of the near North side, died Wednesday in Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

With his partner, Bentley Stone, he established the Stone-Camryn School of Dance in Chicago in 1941, a training ground that in its 40 years produced scores of performers for ballet companies around the world. The school closed in 1981, though both men continued to train students on a reduced schedule. Mr. Stone, 75, died last Feb. 10.

Among the dancers who received early training from the Stone-Camryn school are John Neumeier, director of the Hamburg Ballet in Germany. Other students included Ruth Ann Koesun and the late John Kriza, formerly principal dancers with the American Ballet Theatre, an organization that over the years took on 19 Stone-Camryn alumni.

Besides these professional dancers, the school taught thousands of Chicago children, from 6-year-olds through high school students, who gained their first knowledge and love of dance through their classes in the bustling, memento-filled studio.

When the studio, at 185 W. Madison St., closed in 1981, Mr. Camryn estimated that about 30,000 children had gone through the school. "You get so attached to some of the little ones," he said, "that you hate to let them go and turn them over to other places."

Born in Helena, Mont., Mr. Camryn arrived in Chicago in 1927 to study with Adolph Bolm, an emigrant Russian dancer, and was himself teaching ballet here as early as 1928. He later danced principal roles with the Chicago Civic Opera Ballet, the (Ruth) Page-Stone Ballet and the Federal Theater Project.

There were no immediate survivors.

(Chicago Tribune, Friday March 2, 1984)

THEY WENT UPSTAIRS

-- Joan Ehemann Stone